



Gender Equality Enhancement Fund

Call for Applications – 2022

Call for Proposals

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are invited to submit proposals for funding under the Gender Equality Enhancement Fund, in line with the requirements set out in this document.

This Call is managed by the Higher Education Authority (HEA). Following a competitive process based on this call for applications from HEIs, the HEA will approve funding to support gender equality initiatives to be implemented nationally.

Timeframe:

- Call for applications issues to HEIs – **8th March 2022**
- Deadline for applications - **12:00pm 27th May 2022**
- Announcement of outcome – **Q3 2022**

Background

Diversity is a key strength of Irish higher education. In recent decades our universities, institutes of technology, and colleges have been transformed, from predominantly national institutions catering primarily for school-leavers, to internationally oriented institutions engaged with an increasingly diverse student body, of all ages, backgrounds and gender identities.

Higher education legislation requires institutions to promote gender-balance among students and staff, and for the Higher Education Authority (HEA) to promote the attainment of equality of opportunity.

The [HEA National Review of Gender Equality in Irish Higher Education Institutions \(2016\)](#) was an important first step in highlighting the gender inequality that existed at senior academic levels in our HEIs. The HEA Expert Group report outlined a number of recommendations for the HEIs, HEA, research funding agencies and other key stakeholders. However, despite the publication of the HEA Expert Group report, progress remained slow.

In 2017, the Minister of State for Higher Education established the Gender Equality Taskforce to identify significant measures, drawing on the work of the HEA Expert Group Report published in 2016, that could accelerate progress in achieving gender equality in the Irish HEIs. Their [Action Plan](#), which was launched on 12 November 2018, encompasses a suite of initiatives to bring about sustainable organisational

change and to empower a culture of gender equality in the HEIs for all staff, academic and professional, as well as management and support staff at all levels.

The Gender Equality Taskforce recognised that, in addition to the organisational and culture change initiatives, the incentivisation of progress on gender equality targets through funding mechanisms was needed. Specifically, the Taskforce recommended the following actions:

- HEA block grant funding shall be linked to an institution's performance in addressing gender inequality through the Strategic Dialogue process and System Performance Framework.
- A new 'Gender Equality Enhancement Funding Call' should be set up to support innovative organisational and cultural change initiatives nationally.

Objective of the Call

The primary objectives of the Gender Equality Enhancement Fund are:

- to encourage innovative approaches to addressing gender inequality across HEIs;
- to facilitate gender equality initiatives that respond to the recommendations of the HEA Expert Group and/or Gender Equality Taskforce's recommended actions;
- to encourage cross-sectoral collaboration as a means to achieve national transformation.

Information on the outcome of previous rounds of the Gender Equality Enhancement Fund can be accessed [here](#).

Applications for funding under the Gender Equality Enhancement Fund can be made in three areas and the total funding available for each area is indicated in brackets:

1. Research on or advancing gender equality initiatives in Ireland (€100,000)
2. Training programmes specifically addressing gender equality (€100,000)
3. Athena SWAN capacity-building activities (€50,000)

A **maximum of €50,000** will be awarded to successful applications.

HEI Eligibility

1. Eligible higher education institutions under this initiative are those listed in Appendix 1.
2. Proposals must be collaborative and involve at least **three** eligible higher education institutions.
3. All proposals must nominate a lead institution for administrative and financial purposes.
4. Eligible institutions can lead or partner in proposals. Eligible institutions may make one submission as lead.
5. Sectoral proposals will be accepted from the IUA and THEA or a collaboration of these representative bodies. Each sectoral proposal must include at least **three** eligible HEIs. An eligible institution must act as a lead for the sectoral proposal for administrative and financial purposes.

6. Relevant non-HEI organisations may be included in proposals as partners in addition to the three eligible HEIs.

7. HEIs from outside the Republic of Ireland may be included in proposals as advisory partners in addition to the three eligible HEIs.

Application Procedure

In submitting an application, all partner HEIs will be deemed to have accepted the conditions outlined in this and any subsequent clarifications from the HEA regarding this initiative and to have agreed to be bound by them. Furthermore, signing of the application by the heads of institution (e.g. President, Provost etc.) reflects acceptance of the award and a commitment to provide the necessary support for the programme of activity. All applications must be signed by the heads of the collaborating institutions. Applications should be submitted using the application form by email to CEGE@hea.ie by **12:00pm, 27th May 2022**.

Assessment Panel

The HEA will establish an Assessment Panel to evaluate the applications received. The Assessment Panel will comprise members with expertise in this area. In establishing the Assessment Panel, due regard shall be given to gender balance.

The Assessment Panel will consider the extent to which the applications meet the criteria of the 2022 Call as outlined in this document.

All applications will be assessed solely on the basis of the material provided to the HEA at the time of submission.

The HEA's decision on the award of funding under this Call is final.

Assessment Criteria

In accordance with the objective of this initiative as outlined above, the following criteria will be used to assess proposals. A minimum threshold will apply in respect of each of the assessment criteria. Only proposals which score 70 marks or over (70%) will be considered for funding. Meeting the minimum threshold is no guarantee of funding.

Assessment Criterion	Score	Threshold
1. Alignment with recommendations of HEA Expert Group and / or Gender Equality taskforce's recommended actions	20 marks	10 marks
2. Innovation in specified area of funding (research on or advancing gender equality initiatives in Ireland/ Training programmes specifically addressing gender equality/ Athena SWAN capacity-building activities)	10 marks	5 marks

3. Benefit to HEI Stakeholders nationally	30 marks	15 marks
4. Funding - value for money and impact of programme	10 marks	5 marks
5. Quality of the Proposal	30 marks	15 marks

Reporting and monitoring

Institutions with successful proposals will be required to report to the HEA on progress and the outcomes of funded projects within 12 months of the awarding of funding.

Appendix 1

Eligible HEIs

Atlantic Technological University

Carlow College

Dublin City University

Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies

Dún Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology

Dundalk Institute of Technology

Mary Immaculate College

Maynooth University

Munster Technological University

National College of Art and Design

National College of Ireland

National University of Ireland, Galway

Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, University of Medicine and Health Sciences

St. Angela's College, Sligo

South East Technological University

Technological University Dublin

Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest

Trinity College Dublin

University College Cork

University College Dublin

University of Limerick